



# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0916

April 11, 2018

The Honorable Robert Lighthizer  
United States Trade Representative  
Office of the U.S. Trade Representative  
600 17th St., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer,

We write to reiterate our strong support for inclusion of measures to protect Florida's specialty crop industry, address current unfair trade practices and mounting Mexican imports in any final renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

As members of the Florida Congressional Delegation who serve on the House Ways and Means Committee, we are extremely concerned about the unprecedented growth in imports from Mexico as a result of their unfair subsidies and illegal seasonal dumping and the impact it is having domestically. The United States has an agricultural trade deficit with Mexico of around \$5 billion, much of which is in the fruit and vegetable sector. Because Florida and Mexico share a similar growing season and produce a number of the same specialty crops, Florida producers have been particularly hard hit. In fact, since the year 2000, Florida has experienced a loss of between one and three billion dollars each year due to increased Mexican imports, according to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs.

As the second-leading producer of fruits and vegetables in the country, which supports nearly 100,000 jobs and has an economic impact of more than \$12 billion a year, the specialty crop industry is absolutely critical to our home state of Florida. And while we grow the highest quality produce in the world and can compete in the global marketplace, our industry is hurting right now.

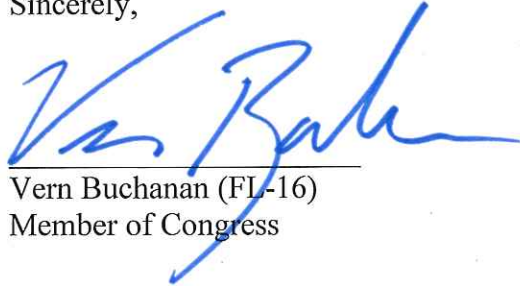
That is why any final agreement must allow our fruit and vegetable growers to use seasonal data to seek regional relief in anti-dumping and countervailing duty cases. We need to provide them with the necessary tools to make the case that that Mexico is selling produce at unfairly low prices when certain crops are in season in a particular region.

Furthermore, failure to include such a provision would also be inconsistent with trade objectives clearly outlined by Congress in Trade Promotion Authority, which instructed our trade negotiators to "improve import relief mechanisms to recognize the unique characteristics of perishable and cyclical agriculture; and ensure that import relief mechanisms for perishable and cyclical agriculture are as accessible and timely to growers in the United States."

We applaud and greatly appreciate your efforts to seek measures consistent with this instruction for our seasonal and perishable crops to date, and urge your steadfast commitment to ensuring these vital unfair trade remedies are included in any final NAFTA agreement.

We respectfully request an update on the current status of negotiations regarding these particular provisions, and appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Vern Buchanan (FL-16)  
Member of Congress



Carlos Curbelo (FL-26)  
Member of Congress